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CONTENTS

I. ARTICLES

1. The Literature of the Pudgalavādins, *by Thich Thien Chau* 7
2. Modern Japanese Buddhology: Its History and Problematics, *by Minoru Kiyota* 17
3. Marginalia to Sa-skya Paṇḍita's Oeuvre, *by L.W.J. van der Kuijp* 37
4. The Problem of the *Icchantika* in the Mahāyāna *Mahāparinirvāṇa Sūtra*, *by Ming-Wood Liu* 57
5. The Sanmon-Jimon Schism in the Tendai School of Buddhism: A Preliminary Analysis, *by Neil McMullin* 83
6. The Indravarman (Avaca) Casket Inscription Reconsidered: Further Evidence for Canonical Passages in Buddhist Inscriptions, *by Richard Salomon and Gregory Schopen* 107
7. The Tibetan "Wheel of Life": Iconography and doxography, *by Geshe Sopa* 125
8. Notes on the Buddha's Threats in the *Dīgha Nikāya*, *by A. Syrkin* 147

II. BOOK REVIEWS

1. *A Buddhist Spectrum*, by Marco Pallis (D. Seyfort Ruegg) 159
2. *The Heart of Buddhism*, by Takeuchi Yoshinori (Paul Griffiths) 162

3. *Paritta: A Historical and Religious Study of the Buddhist Ceremony for Peace and Prosperity in Sri Lanka*, by Lily de Silva (Ter Ellingson) 164
4. *The Threefold Refuge in the Theravāda Buddhist Tradition*, ed. John Ross Carter
Buddhist Images of Human Perfection, by Nathan Katz (Winston King) 169
5. *The Word of the Buddha: the Tripiṭaka and Its Interpretation in Therāvada Buddhism*, by George D. Bond (Nathan Katz) 173

III. PRESIDENTIAL ADDRESS

1. Ascent and Descent: Two-Directional Activity in Buddhist Thought, *by Gadjin M. Nagao* 176

IV. NOTES AND NEWS

1. A Report on the Sixth Conference of the IABS, Held in Conjunction with the 31st CISHAAN, Tokyo and Kyoto, Japan, August 31-September 7, 1983 184

The Indravarman (Avaca) Casket Inscription Reconsidered: Further Evidence for Canonical Passages in Buddhist Inscriptions

by Richard Salomon and Gregory Schopen

A dedicatory inscription on a Buddhist relic casket in 7 lines of Kharoṣṭhī script in the northwestern Prakrit dialect known as Gāndhārī was first published by Sir Harold Bailey (henceforth B) in JRAS 1978, 3–13. The importance of this inscription was immediately recognized by several scholars, and it has subsequently been re-edited by B.N. Mukherjee (M) in *Journal of Ancient Indian History* 11 (1978), 93–114; by Gérard Fussman (F) in *Bulletin de l'École Française d'Extrême-Orient* 67 (1980), 1-43; and by Richard Salomon (S) in *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 102 (1982), 59–68.[1]

All three later editions overlapped in the press, however, so that they could not refer to each other. The revised text and translation now offered below is intended to synthesize the results of all four attempts, in the hope of establishing a standard version. In several places, we have accordingly adopted the readings and/or interpretations of the other editors; e.g., in the important passage *apradiṭhavitaprave*, 1.4, we have accepted F's version, for reasons which will be presented in detail below. In other cases, we have retained S's prior readings and translations, as in *gahiṇie ya utarae*, 1.5; and finally some entirely new interpretations are suggested, for example for *kiḍapaḍiharia avhiye aheṭhi majimami*, 1.1.

Two comments on the treatment of the inscription as a whole may be made here. First, we are now inclined to prefer to refer to it as the "Indravarman Casket Inscription," as do F and Bivar (note 1), rather than the "Avaca Inscription," as in B and

S. Second, we have treated the arrangement of the lines as does F, numbering the two lines on the lid of the casket as 1 and 2 but placing them at the end of the text and translation, since they are clearly intended to be read after the 5 lines on the body of the casket.

Finally, it must be pointed out that all the editors after B have worked from the set of photographs printed by him; none of them, evidently, have seen the original piece, which is presently in the Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge. These photographs are generally good, but are somewhat unclear and probably distorted in places, especially near the edges and the bottom. Some of the problematic readings could probably be clarified by an examination of the original casket.

Text

3) saṁvatsarae treṣaṭhimae 20 20 20 1 1 1 maharayasa ayasa atidasa kartiasa masasa divasae ṣoḍaśae imeṇa cetrike kṣeṇe idravarme kumare apracarajaputre
4) ime bhagavato śakyamuṇisa śarira pradiṭhaveti ṭhiae gabhirae apradiṭhavitaprave pateśe brammapuñ[o] prasavati sadha maduṇa rukhuṇaka ajiputrae apracarajabharyae
5) sadha maülеṇa ramakeṇa sadha maülaṇie daṣakae sadha śpasadarehi vasavadatae mahave(?)dae ṇikae ca gahiṇie ya utarae
6) pidu a puyae viṣ(ṇ)uvarmasa avacarayasa
7) bhrada vaga stratego puyaïte viyayamitro ya avacaraya maduśpasa bhaïdata puyita
1) ime ca śarire muryakaliṇate thubute kiḍapaḍiharia avhiye aheṭhi majimami pratiṭhavaṇami pratiṭha(vi)(sa) [*read* ta]
2) vasia paṁcaïśo

Translation

3) In the sixty-third (63) year of the late Great King Aya [Azes], on the sixteenth day of the month Kartia [Kārttika]; at this auspicious (?) time, Prince Idravarma [Indravarman], son of the King of Apraca,
4) establishes these bodily relics of Lord Śākyamuni in a secure, deep, previously unestablished place; he produces brahma-merit together with his mother Rukhuṇakā̆, daughter of Ăjĭ (and) wife of the King of Apraca,
5) with (his) maternal uncle Ramaka, with (his) maternal uncle's

wife Daṣakā, with (his) sisters and wife—Vasavadata (Vāsavadattā), Mahaveda (?; = Mahāvedā?), and Ṇikā, and (his) wife Utara (Uttarā).

6) And (this is done) in honor of (his) father Viṣṇuvarma. The king of Avaca (= Apraca)'s

7) brother, the Commander Vaga is honored, and Viyayamitra (= Vijayamitra), [former] King of Avaca. (His) mother's sister, Bhaïdata (Bhagidattā?) is honored.

1) And these bodily relics, having been brought in procession from the Muryaka cave stūpa, were established in a secure (?), safe, deep (?) depository,

2) (in) the year twenty-five.

Notes to the Text and Translation

3) *saṁvatsarae:* As in S and M; B and F read *saṁvatśa-*; but F (12) notes that "je pense que la transcription *tsa* serait meilleure," citing GD, 73–4.

imeṇa cetrike kṣeṇe: S formerly read *kṣaṇa;* but what may be signs of the vowel *e* can be faintly discerned over both *akṣaras* of this word.[2] F reads the whole phrase as *imeṇa cetripekṣeṇa*, "par cette quinzaine brillante," taking *-pekṣeṇa* as = Sanskrit *pakṣeṇa* by vowel harmony (13). However, the letter following *tri* could not be *pe*. It is true, as F points out, that the construction is irregular, with the conjunction of instrumental and locative (cf. the notes on the use of the instrumental for locative in S 60). Nevertheless, we have retained S's previous translation, on the grounds of the justification given there (S 60).

4) *śakyamuṇisa:* As in B and S; M and F read *śaka-*. F (13) comments "Je ne vois pas la boucle qui incite Sir Harold [i.e., B] à transcrire *śakyamuṇisa*." But there is a discernible, if not too distinct curve to the left at the foot of the character, which is certainly meant to express a subscript *y*; cf. the similar, though less cursively reduced subscript *y* in the same word in the Kurram casket inscription, line 1d (K 155 and pl. XXIX-D).

apradiṭhavitaprave: S formerly read *a pradiṭhavitaprave* = *ca *pratiṣṭhāpitaprape*, as in B and M. But F's explanation (14) of the phrase as = *apratiṣṭhāpitapūrve* is definitely correct, as explained at length below.

pateśe: As in B, S; M has "*pate*(or *-de*)*śe*"; F, *padeśe*. As the

latter notes concerning this inscription in general, "Il est parfois plus difficile de distinguer les dentales simples, qui sont très proches de forme en *kharoṣṭhī*" (7). It seems to us, however, that the letter in question is quite clearly *t*, not *d*.

brammapuñ[o]: Here M and B read *bramupuña*, while F has *bramupuñ[o]*. But in fact the second letter is not the same as the *mu* in *śakyamuṇisa* (1.4) and *muryaka* (1.1). F justifies his reading on the grounds that "la graphie *bramu* est fréquente en *gāndhārī*" (11), citing Bailey in *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* 11 (1946), 787–9, (F's note 1); but in fact, Bailey gives no instance there of such a spelling. The ligature here (which S previously read as *mha*) is probably a variant of the *mma* common in Gāndhārī (GD 70; cf. *bramma-yiyava*, 128, verse 68). The vowel *o* on the *ñ* is uncertain.

The significance of the term *brammapuña* will be explained below.

rukhuṇaka ajiputrae: Like all others, F divides the words thus, but notes that "La coupe des mots n'est pourtant pas sûre . . . la coupe *rukhuṇaka* implique que le mot n'est pas fléchi, ce qui est surprenant. On peut donc songer à couper *sadha madhuṇa rukhuṇa kaajiputrae* 'avec sa mère Rukhu, fille de Kaajī' " (14). This is possible, but in defense of the reading as given, one could quote F's own observation of "une tendance à constituer des groupes syntaxiques dont seul le dernier terme est décliné" (12).

apraca: B, M read *apaca;* F, *ap[r]aca*. We agree with his observation (14) that a subscript *r* is faintly visible in B's photograph (plate IV).

5) *mahave(?)dae:* The reading here is uncertain. B has *mahaphida a-*, F *mahaphidae*, M *mahapida e-*, and S *mahaedae*. For reasons described previously (S 61), the third *akṣara* cannot be *phi* or *pi*. The two long diagonal lines must be either extraneous marks or, perhaps more likely, correction signs cancelling a wrongly written letter.[3] The preceding letter is still unclear, probably not *e* as S read before, but perhaps *ve*.

gahiṇie ya utarae: F (unlike B and M) divides the words correctly, but his explanation of *gahiṇie* as "enceinte (*garbhiṇi*)" (15; cf. also 11) is unlikely. We see no reason not to take it as =*gṛhiṇī*, as explained in S 61. *ya* = *ca* is well-attested in Kharoṣṭhī; see S 60, and also F 15, K Xcix, and GD 110.

6) *pidu a:* The *a* is problematic. M (101) suggests that it may be a scribal error. F (15) says "Je considère *pidua* comme une graphie malhabile de *pidu(ṇ)a* et je traduis 'en l'honneur des mânes', 'en l'honneur de ses ancêtres décédés.' " This is not impossible, but would certainly require further proof. Although references to "ancêtres décédés" occur in Buddhist inscriptions, they never appear in this form. There is never—as far as we know—any reference to an undifferentiated, collective category comparable to "mânes." In Buddhist inscriptions the "ancêtres décédés" are always specific—"father," "mother," etc.—and frequently referred to by name (cf. G. Schopen, "Filial Piety and the Monk in the Practice of Indian Buddhism: A Question of 'Sinicization' Viewed from the Other Side," *T'oung Pao* 70 (1984) (in the press). In light of this we have followed S in taking *a* as a graphic variant of *ya* = *ca*.

viṣ(ṇ)uvarmasa: The *ṇ* is indicated by a horizontal line above the *ṣ*; cf. the remarks on this and similar diacritic techniques in Kharoṣṭhī in B 12, M 93–4, GD 63, and Salomon, *Studien zur Indologie und Iranistik* 7 (1981), 16, 18.

The name Viṣṇuvarman has been treated differently by the various editors, in accordance with their differing divisions of the phrases in this and in the following passages. Here we follow B, taking *viṣṇuvarmasa* in apposition with *pidu,* on the grounds that there is a consistent pattern in this (and in other similar Kharoṣṭhī inscriptions) of specifying the co-donors with the term of relation first and then the personal name (S 61).

6-7 *avacarayasa bhrada vaga stratego puyaite viyayamitro ya avacaraya:* Following B, S and M took *vaga* as an honorific title "Lord," from Iranian *baga.* F, however, took it as the personal name of the Avacaraya's brother "Vaga le stratège"; and the new inscription published by Bailey (JRAS 1982 no. 2, 142–55) indicates that this is probably the correct interpretation. This new inscription is dated in the year 77 of an *apacaraja bhagamoya,* who is almost certainly to be identified with Apracaraja Viṣṇuvarman's brother Vaga, since, as is well known, the kingship succeeded from elder brother to younger brother among the Indo-Scythians.

viyayamitroya was taken by B, and by the others follow-

ing him, as an anomalous feminine formation, giving the name of the Avacaraya's mother's sister (adopting F's reading of the following phrase). This is to be rejected (as in S) on both philological and stylistic grounds (as it violates the normal pattern of giving the relational term first and then the personal name). *viyayamitro* is to be taken as a graphic variant of Vijayamitra (S 61), the founder of the Apraca dynasty, who is mentioned in a similar context in the new Bhagamoya inscription at the end of the list of co-donors (1.3, *vijayamitro apacaraja*). He evidently was included along with the living relatives in the donations of the Apracaraja family in recognition of his special status as founding father.

We take *ya* as equivalent to *ca*, as in S. However, in view of the name Bhagamoya in the new inscription, which seems to indicate the existence of a (pleonastic?) name suffix -(*m*)*oya*, the name itself should perhaps be read as *viyayamitroya* = Vijayamitra.[4]

7) *maduśpasa bhaïdata:* This is F's correction (16, n.6) of B and the others' *maduka sabhaedata*. F is certainly right that the third *akṣara is śpa*, not *ka*. The previous editors all took the preceding *avacaraya* as compounded with *madu-*, probably on the grounds that the title, already having been used referring (indirectly) to Viṣṇuvarman in 1.3, would not be repeated for Vijayamitra here. But the parallel passage from the Bhagamoya inscription, cited in the preceding note, shows that the title was in fact intended to refer to the (former) King Vijayamitra.

1) *muryaka-*: Here F (4, 16–7) reads *muśyaka-*, which he suggests may mean "des souris (*mūṣika-*) ou des voleurs (MUṢ)." This seems to us unlikely both philologically (the alternation of *ś* and *ṣ* would not be expected) and paleographically (the second *akṣara* is very similar to that in *bharyae*, 1.4).

kiḍapaḍiharia: Here B and M read *paḍibaria;* F has *paḍidraria*, with the remark (16) that "Le *dr-* est maladroit." Here, however, we retain S's reading, as the letter in question seems quite clearly to be *ha*, as in the following word *aheṭhi*. (The two short vertical lines at the top of the letter are probably not significant; there are several such extraneous lines between the top of 1.1 and the groove above it.) But we would

now interpret the compound *kiḍapaḍiharia* in the light of passages such as that found in the Gilgit text of the *Pañcaviṃśati: yaś ca tathāgatasyārhataḥ . . . parinirvṛtasya śarīraṃ pratiṣṭhāpayet parihared vā satkuryād* . . ., where *parihared* appears to refer to some kind of ritual activity connected with carrying relics (text cited from G. Schopen's review of E. Conze, *The Large Sūtra on Perfect Wisdom, Indo-Iranian Journal* 19 (1977), 143 [under C.231.4] and n.3; a similar passage—again from the Gilgit text—is also cited on p. 146 [under C.231.31]). The compound here evidently contains a corresponding nominal form (**parihārita* or **parihărikă*) in a *bahuvrīhi* meaning literally "for which the ritual procession has been done;" or, more freely, "brought in procession." (On the intentionally Sanskritized style and composition of this inscription, see the remarks of F, 9).

avhiye: Here B and S read *avi ya;* M, *avi yie;* F, *savhiye.* We now accept F's reading of the second and third *akṣaras,* but still see the first as *a* rather than *sa.* F (17) remarks that "la lecture me paraît sûre"; but since this part of the text appears near the edge of the photographs (on the left of B's pl.II and the right of III), it may be subject to distortion. An examination of the original would be necessary to confirm the reading here. F takes *sabhiye* as equivalent to Sanskrit **sabhiyā,* "avec crainte." We tentatively accept the equivalance of *vhi* = *bhī,* but read *abhiye* and interpret this as = **abhĭye* or **abhīke,* i.e., as an adjective "secure, safe" in the locative modifying the following *pratiṭhavaṇami.* The equation of Kharoṣṭhī *vh* = Sanskrit *bh,* however, calls for some comment; the Kharoṣṭhī *akṣara* usually transliterated *vh* and presumed to represent a labial spirant (GD 65–6) generally occurs in inscriptions in Iranian names; e.g. Iṁtavhria (K77, 1.2, and 74), Guduvhara (= Gondophernes; K 62, 1.1), Daṣavhara (K 165, 1.4). In the Gāndhārī *Dhammapada* and other Kharoṣṭhī documents, however, it is well attested as an equivalent of Sanskrit *bh* (e.g. *lavhu* = *lābha;* GD 96–7). In view of the fact that several other orthographical peculiarities of the non-epigraphic Kharoṣṭhī texts have parallels in inscriptions (see *Studien zur Indologie und Iranistik* 7, 13–5), F's equation of *vh* = *bh* in this case is acceptable, if not certain.

aheṭhi: We now follow F in taking this as an adjectival form rather than as part of a proper name, as done by the other editors. However, rather than being interpreted as = *aheṭha* or as an absolutive <**aheṭhya* (F 17), it can more easily be explained as another adjective, "without harm," i.e., "safe," in the locative. (For locatives in *-i*, see K cxiii.)

majimami: This is been taken by all previous editors as a proper name (S) or as "central" (B, M, F), i.e., <*majjhima*< *madhyama* (B 10) with anomalous deaspiration (F 11). However, it may be that *aheṭhi majimami* repeats the sense of *ṭhiae gabhirae* of 1.4, so that *majimami* would not be = *majjhima*, but rather is to be connected with √*majj* "sink" / *magna* "sunk," i.e., "deep" (=*gabhīra*), evidently as another adjective (=**majjima*) in the locative.

pratiṭha (*vi*) (*sa*): Here B reads *pratiṭhavita;* M "*pratiṭhavisa* (should be *-ta*)"; S *pratiṭha(vita)*; and F *pradiṭhaṭhisa*. As noted by the last three editors (S 62; F 8, "il faut manifestement corriger en *pradiṭha[vita]*"), the last two *akṣaras* are almost certainly a scribal error. The first of them may be a *ṭha*, repeated by dittography from the preceding letter and then imperfectly corrected to *vi*. The last letter, *sa* in place of the expected *ta*, may be a miscopying from an exemplar of the text.

2) *vasia:* Here F reads *nisia*, remarking (17) that "Malheureusement, le mot qui précède la date n'est pas clair. Sir Harold [i.e., B] transcrit, avec un ?, *vasia* = *vaṣe* 'en l'an',[5] ce que la paléographie et la philologie me paraissent exclure. Je crois que le premier *akṣara* ressemble vaguement à un *ni* dont la tête serait effacée. Je transcris NISIA, en majuscules d'imprimerie, car je n'ai aucune interprétation sémantiquement plausible à en proposer." It is true, as F suggests, that the form of the first letter is somewhat irregular, but *va* still seems a more probable reading than *ni*. For *vasia* = *varṣa* (or *vārṣika;* or *varṣīya*, as suggested by M 96), cf. the explanatory notes in S 62; and also compare *vaṣaye* in the Bajaur casket inscription, line D 2 (S 63). The *s* in place of *ṣ*, however, is admittedly irregular.

paṁcaiśo: This is F's reading, correcting the *paṁcaviśo* of the previous editors. "La disparition de *-v-* est normale" (F 17, note 4), and the meaning, "twenty-five," remains the same.

Commentary

There is one passage in our inscription which requires additional comment. Beginning at the end of line 3 we find *idravarme kumare apracarajaputre ime bhagavato śakyamuṇisa śarira pradiṭhaveti ṭhiae gabhirae apradiṭhavitaprave pateśe brammapuñ[o] prasavati sadha maduṇa rukhuṇaka,* etc. It will be obvious from a comparison of B, M, S and F that in regard to the reading *apradiṭhavitaprave pateśe* we have followed F. B read *a pradiṭhavita-prave pateśe* and translated "in a place having established watering-cisterns." Both M and S followed B in their readings and interpretations, though not exactly in their translations. But F (14), referring to B, noted that "Le sens convient mal." He then went on to say "La 1.5 de 3 [another Kharoṣṭhī inscription published by F in the same paper] me permet de donner une interprétation plus satisfaisante," and he read not *a pradiṭhavitaprave pateśe,* but *apradiṭhavitaprave padeśe,* which he translated "dans une région . . . où il n'y avait pas de fondation auparavant." In his commentary on this passage (14) he adds: ". . . Indravarma se félicite de faire oeuvre missionnaire en établissant des reliques dans un endroit (*padeśe*) où il n'y avait pas de fondation bouddhique (*apradiṭhavita*) auparavant (*prave* pour *pruve/purve*)." The inscription F refers to as Number 3 in his remarks just quoted reads in part (11.5-6) . . . *apratistavitapruve paḍhavipradeśe pratiṭhaveti bhagavato śariraṃ* . . . "[Ramaka . . .] dans un endroit de la terre où il n'y avait pas de fondation auparavant, établit des reliques corporelles du Bienheureux." This parallel clearly supports F's reading and interpretation, as B himself has indicated in his notes to the new Bhagamoya inscription (JRAS 1982, 152). In this inscription, we find a second parallel which supports F: . . . *bhagamoyeṇa bhagavato śakamuṇi dhatuve pratiṭhavita apratiṭhavitapurvaṃmi pradeśami* . . . "by . . . Bhagamoya, the relics of the Lord Śakyamuni were established in a previously unestablished place. . . ."[6] And interestingly enough, these two parallels allow us to locate a third which has not been noted by either F or B. This third parallel occurs in the Taxila copper-plate of Patika (K 28-9): . . . *atra [de] śe patiko apratiṭhavita bhagavata śakamuṇisa śariraṃ [pra]tiṭhaveti.* Konow translated this almost exactly as had Bühler[7] thirty years earlier: ". . . in this place Patika establishes a (formerly) not established relic of the Lord Śākyamuni . . ." Konow here has made *apratiṭhavita* modify *śariraṃ* rather than [*de*]*śe,* which

has the effect of disguising the parallelism. But in light of F's inscription no. 3, as well as of the inscriptions of Indravarman and Bhagamoya, it would appear almost certain that *apratiṭhavita* in the Patika plate was intended to modify [*de*]*śe* and not *śariraṃ*, and that the passage must now be translated ". . . in this (formerly) unestablished place Patika establishes a relic of the Lord Śākyamuni."

In terms of the epigraphical evidence alone, F's reading and interpretation of our passage in the Indravarman inscription is, then, firmly supported: there are the two certain parallels in F's inscription no. 3 and in the inscription of Bhagamoya, and there is the almost certain parallel in the Taxila copper plate of Patika. There is, however, more. None of the editors of these inscriptions has noticed that the vocabulary, if not in some cases the actual syntax, of all these passages has been taken over from a canonical Buddhist text, or that—at the very least—there is clear textual authority for the expressions *deśe . . . apratiṭhavita*, or *apratistavitapruve paḍhavipradeśe*, or *apradiṭhavitaprave pateśe*, in regard to sites on which stūpas or relics are to be established, and for the idea that establishing relics on such sites "generates" *brammapuña*.

In the *Abhidharmakośa* of Vasubandhu IV.124, and the *Bhāṣya* on it we read, in de la Vallée Poussin's translation: "Le Sūtra dit que quatre personnes produisent le mérite 'brahmique', *brāhma puṇya*. Quel est ce mérite? . . . 124 c-d. Quatre possèdent le mérite brahmique, parce qu'ils sont heureux dans les cieux pendant un *kalpa*. Le mérite de telle mesure qu'on est heureux dans les ciel pendant un *kalpa*, c'est le mérite brahmique, car la vie des *Brahmapurohitas* est d'un *kalpa*."[8] If we had only this it would be interesting, but we could only establish that some idea of *brāhma puṇya* was canonical. Fortunately, however, there is more. Yaśomitra has been kind enough to cite in his *Sphuṭārthā* the full text of "Le Sūtra" referred to in the *Bhaṣya*. There we find: *sūtra uktam—catvāraḥ pudgalāḥ brāhmaṃ puṇyaṃ prasavanti. apratiṣṭhite pṛthivīpradeśe tathāgatasya śārīraṃ stūpaṃ pratiṣṭhāpayati—ayaṃ prathamaḥ pudgalaḥ brāhmaṃ puṇyaṃ prasavati,* etc.[9]: "In a Sūtra it was said—'Four [kinds of] persons beget brahma-merit. (One) causes a relic stūpa of the Tathāgata to be established on an unestablished spot of earth. This first (kind of) person generates brahma-merit.'" De la Vallée Poussin,

with his still-astounding erudition, has identified this text with *Ekottarāgama* 21.5 and *Vibhāṣā* 82.4.[10] We have to do, then, with a well known Hīnayāna canonical sūtra.

A somewhat developed version of the same basic statement is also found in a short Mahāyāna text entitled *Ārya-pratītya-samutpāda-nāma-mahāyāna-sūtra*. This text unfortunately has not come down to us in Sanskrit, but the Tibetan text is quite clear on the points that concern us. It has *rigs kyi bu'am rigs kyi bu mo dad pa can gang la la zhig gis mi gnas pa'i phyogs su mchod rten ni skyu ru ra'i 'bru tsam srog shing ni khab tsam gdugs ni ba kul'i me tog tsam zhig byas la / rten cing 'brel bar 'byung ba chos kyi dbyings kyi tshigs su bcad pa nang du btsug na de tshangs pa'i bsod nams bskyed par 'gyur te:*[11] "If a devoted son or daughter of good family were to make on an unestablished place (*apratiṣṭhite deśe* or *pradeśe*) a stūpa the size of an *āmalaka* fruit—with a *yaṣṭi* the size of a needle and an umbrella the size of a *bakula* flower—and were to put in it the verse of the Dharma-relic of *pratītyasamutpāda*, he would generate brahmic merit (*brāhmapuṇyaṃ prasavet*)." There can, we think, be no doubt about the equivalences *mi gnas pa'i phyogs su* = *apratiṣṭhite deśe/pradeśe* and *tshangs pa'i bsod nams bskyed par 'gyur te* = *brāhmapuṇyaṃ prasavet*.[12]

These textual sources, then, provide even stronger additional support for F's reading and interpretation of the Indravarman inscription, and provide additional support for our correction of Konow's translation of the Taxila copper plate of Patika. Moreover, they prove beyond any doubt that the idea that is explicitly expressed in the Indravarman inscription, and probably to be understood in its three parallel inscriptions—i.e., the idea that establishing relics on a previously unestablished site results in *brāhma-puṇya*—has an old and continuous textual authority: the *Ekottarāgama*, the *Vibhāṣā*, the *Abhidharmakośa*, the *Sphuṭārthā* and the *Pratītyasamutpāda-sūtra* all refer to it. But there may be even more here. If we place the passage from the Indravarman inscription, *ime bhagavato śakyamuṇisa śarira pradiṭhaveti ṭhiae gabhirae apradiṭhavitaprave pateśe brammapuñ(o) prasavati*, beside the *Ekottarāgama* passage, *apratiṣṭhite pṛthivīpradeśe tathāgatasya śārīraṃ stūpaṃ pratiṣṭhāpayati- ayaṃ prathamaḥ pudgalaḥ brāhmaṃ puṇyaṃ prasavati*, it is difficult to avoid the conclusion that there is some kind of direct connection between the two. If we note that the connection between

establishing relics on an *apratiṣṭhita-pṛthivīpradeśa* and generating *brāhma-puṇya* is not a common one in textual sources, and is—as far as we know—found only in this *Ekottarāgama* passage and the series of texts which either cite it or refer to it; and if we note further that neither the term *brāhma-puṇya* nor the verb *prasavati* used in connection with the production of merit are found anywhere else in Indian Buddhist inscriptions, then it is even more difficult to avoid such a conclusion. It would thus seem that we have in the Indravarman inscription, if not a direct quotation of the *Ekottarāgama* passage from some otherwise unknown redaction of the text, at least a distinct paraphrase or epigraphical adaptation of the passage.

Moreover, there are at least two other aspects of this passage in our inscription, especially in regard to the phrase *brammapuñ[o] prasavati,* which clearly point to the same conclusion. First, in virtually all Kharoṣṭhī donative inscriptions—and in Buddhist donative inscriptions generally—reference to the merit of the act recorded, or to the purpose for which it was undertaken, comes at the end of the inscription, *after* the donor names himself and those he wishes to associate with his act. The Kalawān copper plate inscription of the year 134 is a good example of this: (1) *saṃvatśaraye 1 100 20 10 4 ajasa śravaṇasa masasa divase treviśe 20 1 1 1 imeṇa kṣuṇeṇa caṃdrabhi uasia (2) Dhraṃmasa grahavatisa dhita Bhadravalasa bhaya chaḍaśilae śarira praïstaveti gahathu–(3) bami sadha bhraduṇa Ṇaṃdivaḍhaṇeṇa grahavatiṇa sadha putrehi Śameṇa Saïteṇa ca dhituṇa ca (4) Dhramae sadha ṣṇuṣaehi Rajae Idrae ya sadha Jivaṇaṃdiṇa Śamaputreṇa ayarieṇa ya sarvasti-(5) vaaṇa parigrahe raṭhaṇikamo puyaïta sarvasvatvaṇa puyae ṇivaṇasa pratiae hotu.*[13] Another good Kharoṣṭhī example is the Māṇikiāla inscription of the year 18 (K 149–50); and the Sārnāth image inscription of the bhikṣu Bala is an equally good example of the typical pattern in a non-Kharoṣṭhī inscription.[14] The placement of the phrase *bramma-puñ*[o] *prasavati* in the Indravarman inscription is therefore decidedly odd, not to mention awkward, and it has given most of its translators some difficulty. It is simply stuck into the middle of an otherwise normal enumeration.

The second noteworthy peculiarity of this phrase is that when a donor in a Kharoṣṭhī inscription refers to the merit of his act, or the purpose for which it was undertaken, he every-

where else uses a "dative of purpose" without a finite verb (. . .*da[ṇa]mukhe Budhorumasa arogadakṣi[ṇae]*, K 124; or, if he uses a finite verb, it is always an imperative (. . .*śarira praïstaveti. . .ṇivaṇasa pratiae hotu*). A present-tense verb is never used in such a context. A donor never asserts in a declarative sentence that by his act he achieves something. He always says "This is/was done for the sake of achieving something," or "This is/was done. May it be for the sake of achieving something." These statements are always declarations of intent, never expressions of fact. And yet in our passage from the Indravarman inscription it appears that Indravarman is the subject of the sentence *brammapuñ[o] prasavati*, and that he is saying "at a certain date he, Indravarman, establishes the relics, and he generates brahma-merit." The second statement here would then be—exactly like the first—a straightforward expression of fact; but this is decidedly odd in light of what we find everywhere else in our Kharoṣṭhī inscriptions.

The fact that we find an accusative and a present-tense construction in the Indravarman passage where everywhere else in donative formulae we find a construction involving a "dative of purpose," or a dative of purpose + an imperative is yet another indication that the phrase *brammapuño prasavati* may not belong to the same type of discourse as our other donative formulae; i.e., that it is not a part of a "standard" Buddhist epigraphical language and must therefore have been derived from some other source. The use of the present tense in our passage is also particularly significant if we note that the only instance of the use of a present-tense verb in the Kharoṣṭhī inscriptions edited by Konow—apart from the forms of *pratiṭhaveti* used to express the main act of the donation—occurs in what Konow calls "a quotation from the Buddhist scriptures" in the Kurram casket inscription of the year 20.[15]

The one other instance in Indian Buddhist inscriptions that is known to us of the use of a present form in regard to the merit resulting from a religious act points us in a similar direction. We refer here to two similar inscriptions found at Ajaṇṭā. The first occurs in Cave XXII and reads:

1. [siddham] deyadharmmo yaṃ
   śākyabhiksho[r] ma[hā]yāna. . . . .
   . . . .

[sarvvasatvā]nām anuttara[jñā]nāvāptaye / saurupya-saubhāgya-guṇopapaṃnnā guṇendriye bhāsvara-dīptayas te [I] bhavaṃnti te nayanābhirāmā

2. ye kārayaṃntīha jinasya bi[ṃ]ba[ṃ] [I][16]

Here we have a statement that "Those who have an image of the Buddha made, they are possessed of beauty, prosperity and good qualities, etc." But the present-tense construction here quite clearly occurs not as a part of the donor's record, but in what appears to be a quotation from an as-yet-unidentified canonical text which is cited at the end of the inscription. Note that in the donor's statement in regard to the merit of his act, the expected "dative of purpose" construction is used (*anuttara-[jñā]nāvāptaye*). That we have to do here with a quotation from an authoritative—though unidentified—textual source is indicated by the fact that similar verses are found in texts like the *Tathāgatabimbakārāpaṇasūtra*,[17] and by the fact that exactly the same verse is used by another donor—this time at the beginning of his record—in an inscription found in Cave X at Ajaṇṭā.[18]

Thus, it is not only the vocabulary of our passage (*bramma-puñ[o]*, *prasavati*) which is foreign to what we find elsewhere in Indian Buddhist inscriptions, but the grammar and syntax as well (the use of the present tense, etc.). Both strongly suggest that we have here a case where canonical material has—as in the Kurram casket inscription and the two inscriptions from Ajaṇṭā—been more or less directly transferred into an epigraphical text. In this case, as we have seen above, we have very good reasons for suspecting that the canonical passage came from some redaction of the *Ekottarāgama*.

The strong likelihood of a direct relationship between our passage in the Indravarman inscription and some redaction of the *Ekottarāgama* is of significance from a number of points of view. First of all, if we are right, this would be the earliest[19] certain example of a direct contact between Buddhist canonical literature and Buddhist inscriptions. Secondly, if it is fairly certain that there is a direct relationship between our passage in the Indravarman inscription and the *Ekottara* passage, then it is almost equally certain that this same *Ekottara* passage lies behind all of the passages from the Kharoṣṭhī inscriptions we

have cited which refer to "establishing relics on previously unestablished sites." This in turn would indicate that our passage, and by extension some version of the *Ekottarāgama*, had wide currency in the Kharoṣṭhī area around the beginning of the Christian era, and perhaps somewhat earlier. Thirdly, the fact that all our inscriptions are written in Gāndhārī Prakrit suggests that the redaction of the *Ekottara* which lies behind our inscriptions may also have been written in Gāndhārī. If this is the case then our inscriptions, and in particular the Indravarman inscription, may be taken as further epigraphical evidence for the existence of a canon in Gāndhārī.[20] Finally, our inscriptions prove beyond any real doubt that the idea that "brahma-merit" results from establishing relics at previously unestablished sites was not simply a "canonical" doctrine, but was an important element in the actual practice of Buddhism in the Kharoṣṭhī area in the early centuries of the Christian era. Given the fact that we rarely know which of the doctrinal assertions and injunctions found in the canonical literature had any impact on actual practice, this may prove to be of particular significance.

Additional note:

After our paper had already gone to press we discovered another version of the *brāhmaṃ puṇyaṃ prasavati* passage preserved in Sanskrit, in the Gilgit text of the Vinaya of the Mūlasarvāstivādin. It does not differ markedly from the version found in Yaśomitra's *Sphuṭārtha:*

> *catvāra ime śāriputramaudgalyāyanau brāhmam puṇyam prasavanti. katame catvāraḥ. yaḥ pudgalaḥ apratiṣṭhitapūrve pṛthivīpradeśe tathāgatasya śārīraṃ stūpam pratisthāpayati; ayaṃ prathamaḥ pudgalaḥ brāhmam puṇyam prasavati; kalpaṃ svargeṣu modate.* (R. Gnoli, *The Gilgit Manuscript of the Saṅghabhedavastu,* Part II [Serie Orientale Roma XLIX, 2] (Roma: 1978) 206.15).

Notice, however, that our passage occurs in a conversation concerning the "splitting" of the saṅgha and that, therefore, it is only the third category of individuals who "produce brahma-

merit"—i.e. *yaḥ pudgalaḥ tathāgataśrāvakasaṅghaṃ bhinnaṃ sandhatte*—which fits the context. This might suggest that our passage is a part of a set-piece which the compilers of the Vinaya "borrowed" and that it is not original to the Vinaya.

Notes

1. A.D.H. Bivar has also commented on the historical significance of the inscription in two recent papers: "The Azes Era and the Indravarma Casket" in *South Asian Archaeology* 1979, ed. Herbert Härtel (Berlin: 1981), 369–76, and "The 'Vikrama' Era, the Indravarma Casket, and the coming of the Indo-Scythians, forerunners of the Afghans," in *Monumentum Georg Morgenstierne* (Acta Iranica 21; Leiden: 1981), 47–58.

Other abbreviations used in this paper are: GD = John Brough, *The Gāndhārī Dharmapada* (London: 1962); K = Sten Konow, *Kharoṣṭhī Inscriptions* (Corpus Inscriptionum Indicarum II. 2, Calcutta: 1929); JRAS = *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society*.

2. Cf. F 8, on the inscription as a whole: "la lecture des traits diacritiques, *-e-* and *-ra-* en particulier, est parfois douteuse." Thus B has here *kṣaṇa;* M *kshaṇ(e);* and F *kṣeṇa*.

3. A similar pair of diagonals is visible in the first letter in 1.4 of the new inscription of the year 77 (JRAS 1982, 150 1.4, and pl. V a and b; see notes on ll.6–7 below). Bailey reads this *akṣara* as a ligature '*gro-ṇada*'; we see it as *gro*, written by mistake and then cancelled by the scribe, who then rewrote the intended letter correctly in the following *akṣara*.

4. The details of the interpretation of the Bhagamoya inscription and its relation to the Indravarman inscription will be discussed in S's forthcoming paper, "The Bhagamoya Relic Bowl Inscription," in *Indo-Iranian Journal* 27 (1984).

5. This is inaccurate; B actually says (10) "*vasi'a* for ‹*di*›*vasi'a*, rather than for *vasi'a* 'year.' "

6. S's reading and translation; see note 4 above.

7. G. Bühler, "Taxila Plate of Patika," *Epigraphia Indica* 4 (1896–7), 56.

8. L. de la Vallée Poussin, *L'Abhidharmakośa de Vasubandhu*, T. III (Paris: 1923–31; repr. Bruxelles: 1971), 250–51.

9. S.D. Shastri, *Abhidharmakośa & Bhāṣya of Acharya Vasubandhu with Sphuṭārthā Commentary of Ācārya Yaśomitra*, Part II (Varanasi: 1971), 751. (This was the only edition available to us; de la Vallée Poussin also cites the text of the Sphuṭārthā (ibid., n. 1), presumably from Mss.).

10. *L'Abhidharmakośa*, T. III, 250 n. 2.

11. The Tibetan text is cited from N.A. Sastri, *Ārya Śālistamba Sūtra, Pratītyasamutpādavibhaṅganirdeśasūtra and Pratītyasamutpādagāthā Sūtra* (Madras: 1950) 71–72.

12. For *tshangs pa'i bsod nams* = *brāhma-puṇya* see A. Hirakawa et al., *Index*

to the Abhidharmakośabhāṣya, Part One (Tokyo: 1973), 273; for *mi gnas pa, phyogs* and *bskyed pa* see L. Chandra, *Tibetan-Sanskrit Dictionary* (New Delhi: 1961; repr. Kyoto: 1976), 1803; 1570–71; 205.

13. S. Konow, "Kalawān Copper-plate Inscription of the Year 134," JRAS 1932, 950.

14. D.R. Sahni, *Catalogue of the Museum of Archaeology at Sarnath* (Calcutta: 1914), 35 (B(A)1).

15. K cxv; Konow, "Remarks on a Kharoṣṭhi Inscription from the Kurram Valley," *Indian Studies in Honor of Charles Rockwell Lanman* (Cambridge, Mass.: 1929), 56.

16. N.P. Chakravarti and B.Ch. Chhabra, "Notes on the Painted and Incised Inscriptions of Caves XX–XXVI," Appendix to G. Yazdani, *Ajanta*, Part IV: Text (Oxford: 1955), 112.

17. A. Mette, "Zwei kleine Fragmente aus Gilgit," *Studien zur Indologie und Iranistik* 7 (1981), 138.

18. N.P. Chakravarti, "A Note on the Painted Inscriptions in Caves VI–XVII," Appendix to G. Yazdani, *Ajanta*, Part III: Text (Oxford: 1946), 92 (no. 8).

19. The date of the inscription, 63 of the Aya (or Azes, = "Vikrama") era, is equivalent to 5–6 A.D. (See S 60, 65ff.)

20. Cf. K, 168–69; Konow, op. cit. (note 15), 56, 58; GD 42, 50–54.